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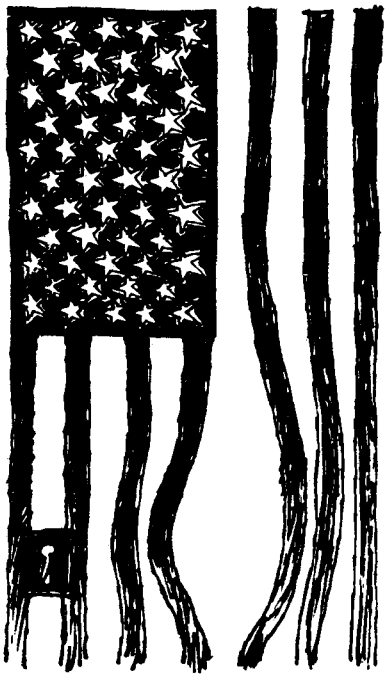

THE PRELATE AND THE PRISONERS

Pilgrimage of a Third World Bishop

William J. Davis

REQUIEM FOR AN ANARCHIST *Michael True* **REVOLUTION ON THE BURMA TRAIL?** *Ved P. Nanda* **THE NEW NEWSREEL** *Phil Tracy* **STOMP AND SALVATION** *Gerald Weales* **MR. BELLOW'S PLANET** *Keith Opdahl* **NOTES ON NEW FICTION** *Linda Kuehl* **PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION** *W.W. Meissner* **THE MODERN SCHISM OF MARTIN MARTY** *Anselm Atkins* **UNIONS VS. CITY HALL** *James Graham*

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NEWS & VIEWS

Vocations and Celibacy

The vocations decline shows no sign of leveling off. The new Catholic Directory for England and Wales records 142 ordinations during 1969 against 179 the year before. Only 475 young men entered French seminaries last year compared to 810 in 1968. Ordinations in Holland have slipped from 421 in 1957 to 145 last year. Spain's Bilbao seminary has 320 students; 10 years ago the number was close to 700. Everywhere it's the same, except maybe Ireland.

The tendency in some quarters is to link the decrease in vocations to Rome's obstinacy on celibacy. There's some relation, but not so much as many argue. Berlin's Cardinal Bengsch comments that the problem goes much deeper, and he's right.

The vocations question is actually just one manifestation of a larger crisis of faith and belief, of institutional credibility and the broadening conviction that the priesthood is no more supremely useful a career than many others.

For the Establishment it's an exasperating dilemma.

A change in the celibacy laws would return to "orthodoxy" many priests who have left to be married, but not all or even the major part of these men.

And it is extremely doubtful that it would noticeably influence the generation now making its decision about life. The priesthood could offer them the privileges of Brigham Young, and there'd still be the matter of faith and belief.

This is what must complicate Rome's position. It could alter the celibacy laws tomorrow and the basic difficulties would still be there, still unresolved. There's just no panacea, no ready remedy for the church's general malaise.

In a way, it makes it easier to see why Rome should hold fast to old traditions. The celibacy laws cry for change, but what's to be gained by change at the moment, except maybe the cynical judgment that Rome is reacting to pressure out of institutional self-interest?

Christ to a Marxist

Marxist philosopher Roger Garaudy speaks of Christ in the French Franciscan review *Evangile aujourd'hui*:

"About the time of the reign of Tiberius, no one knew exactly where or when, a person whose name was unknown made a break-through in man's horizon. He was neither philosopher nor tribune, but one who lived in such a way that his life signified that every one of us can, at every moment, begin a new future. . . .

"In order to proclaim the good news to the very end, it was necessary that he announce that every limitation, even the supreme limitation, death itself, had been conquered. Thus his resurrection.

"Various scholars are able to challenge every fact of this existence, but that changes nothing in regard to the certainty which changes life. A fire had been lighted.

"This fire was first of all a rising of the poor, without which, from Nero to Diocletian, the 'Establishment' would not have persecuted to the extent it did. With this man, love was to be militant, subversive; if it weren't he would not have been crucified. . . . His death was like the birth of a new man.

"I look on that cross, and I think of all those who have expanded man's horizon—John of the Cross, who teaches us by dint of having nothing; Karl Marx, who has shown us how we can change the world; Van Gogh—these and others who have made us realize that man is too great to be sufficient unto himself.

"You the receivers of the great hope that Constantine stole from us, you men of the church, restore him [Christ] to us. His life and his death are for us also, who have learned from him that man has been created a creator.

"The power to create, the divine attribute of man, is there—it is, my friends. It is present every time something new is born to augment the human form: in the most passionate love, in scientific discovery, in poetry, even in revolution."

Thus wrote Garaudy. *Informations Catholiques* suggests he may have been responding to the Christmas message of Paul VI, in which the Pope maintained that a Christless humanism cannot be a true humanism. If so, Garaudy scored points.

Now It's Official

The report here [11/21/69] that 105-year-old *Ave Maria* would be phased out in favor of *A.D. 1970* wasn't so "factually inaccurate" as *Ave Maria* editor Father John Reedy, C.S.C., protested [12/12/69]. The event will come to pass March 28.

Reedy will remain head of Ave Maria Press, the publishing house. Joe McLellan, ex of the Boston *Pilot* and RNS, will move in as editor of *A.D. 1970*, and, with staffers from the late *Ave Maria*, will produce a news-oriented magazine, "religious in its outlook and ecumenical in its interests."

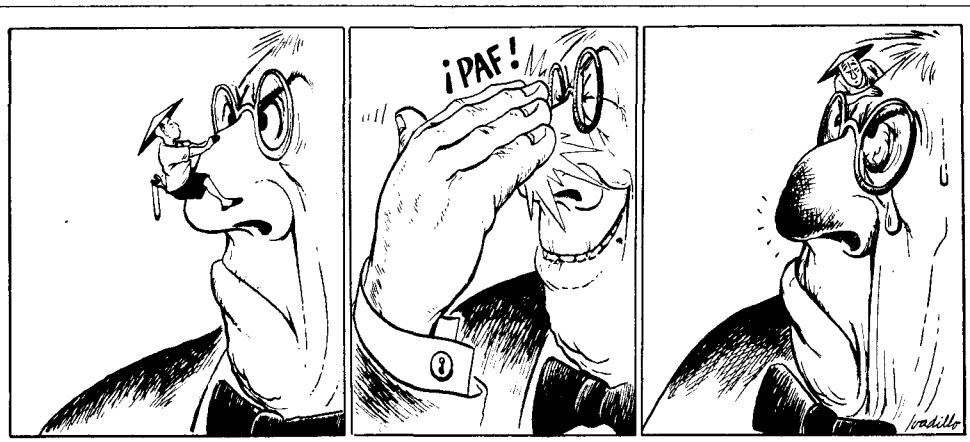
With religious publications dying right and left, McLellan brims with hope. "The growing mood now is for conciliation," he says, "for moving toward a new consensus which will make room for diverse attitudes that have developed in the last decade."

A.D. 1970 will aim at the 25-40 age group. The approach "won't be theological or scholarly." It will be that of the "journalist [as] skilled craftsman." The focus in the main will be on one major story per issue.

Odds and Ends

—The military's opposition to a bombing halt of North Vietnam was based, recall, on the proposition that the halt would bring a rise in U.S. casualities. AP writer George Esper notes that in the 63 weeks since LBJ stopped the bombing, the rate of U.S. battlefield deaths has declined by one-third.

JOHN DEEDY



Vadillo—*Siempre*, Mexico

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CORRESPONDENCE

A Certain Obtuseness

Walnut Creek Calif.

To the Editors: On occasion your journal offers some fresh insights, like the piece by John Deedy on the obtuseness of the military in offering jocular comments upon a picture of a tiny Vietnamese waif picking her way through barbed wire. Often, however, the charge of obtuseness can be laid at your own door: witness Deedy's latest column "Out-spiroing Spiro." Our news media must indeed affect our dealings with North Vietnam inasmuch as they can (and at times do) give the impression of agitation by the majority of our citizens for immediate military withdrawal: an erroneous impression. But he reduces such an opinion (by General Walt) to, "we're to lean now on Cronkite instead of Abrams." Note the use of "instead" and not "as well as," which, no doubt, Walt meant. If this is only feigned obtuseness then it is dishonest reporting. In the article on Cuba by James Harvey how is one to take his measured, glowing report on Cuba juxtaposed with his characterization of the U.S.: "unlivable cities, inhuman conditions of work, the squalor, violence and callousness of American life in general"? It strikes me that what some of your writers take as their own perceptiveness about other societies may really be a certain obtuseness about their own. LEONID BRYNER

Unhurried Pursuit of Justice

East Sullivan, N.H.

To the Editors: Father Dirvin's incredible letter [Jan. 16] demands a response. His plea for St. John's University would wring tears from a stone —provided that the stone was totally unacquainted with the facts.

For it's the facts, and not an article in *Commonweal* or *The American Teacher,* that have made St. John's University and its administration a stale and tasteless academic joke. And so,

(Continued on page 543)

NEWS & VIEWS: 522 **CORRESPONDENCE: 523**
EDITORIALS: 523
REQUIEM FOR AN ANARCHIST: *Michael True* **525**
FATHER SCHALL AGAINST THE WALL: *Peter Steinfels* **526**
THE PRELATE AND THE PRISONERS: *William J. Davis* **527**
REVOLUTION ON THE BURMA TRAIL?: *Ved P. Nanda* **530**
THE NEW NEWSREEL: *Phil Tracy* **532**
VERSE: *Sr. Maura, S.S.N.D.* **529**
THE STAGE: *Gerald Weales* **534**
***BOOKS:* 535**
Illustration on front cover and page 527: Helix/LNS

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GERMS AND TOXINS

In a statement last November, President Nixon said that the United States would keep its stockpile of chemical weapons but would never use them unless they were first used by an enemy. Almost immediately there was some national embarrassment about this position: it turned out that the United States did not count as chemical weapons tear gas and defoliants—by some strange chance the only items of this nature which we care to employ and which are in wide use by our forces in Vietnam. A good indication of how all this struck other nations can be seen in the outcome of the subsequent UN General Assembly vote on defining chemical warfare: of all the nations voting, only Portugal and Australia were willing to support the United States position.

On germ warfare Mr. Nixon said the United States would "renounce the use of lethal biological agents and weapons and all other methods of biological warfare." But almost immediately afterward the weasel-question was raised: should the United States ban include renunciation of toxins—poisons which have many of the characteristics of chemicals but which are in fact products of germs? Unlike germs, toxins do not multiply in the human body, and they are not contagious. However, they can produce such diseases as botulism, diphtheria, staphylococcus, food poisoning and typhoid. In the course of the discussion that followed, it developed that the Defense Department already had a stockpile of poison bullets containing botulinium toxin. Never ready to give up, the military is now fighting hard to preserve the use of toxins as weapons, insisting that they fall under the category of chemical weapons, despite the fact that its own literature elsewhere describes toxins as "part of the biological warfare arsenal."

It is hard to see how the crucial question of whether toxins should be considered biological or chemical could have been left unsettled when President Nixon was preparing his official statement, something the President said at the time had been "carefully considered by the National Security Council," but apparently the N.S.C. spent months on this issue without the question's being raised. Now Mr. Nixon has been given an interagency report on the subject which outlines three choices for the United States:

1) Permit the continued production of toxins;

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2) Ban present methods of production, but seek a method of producing toxins synthetically, without germ-production.

3) Give up toxins entirely.

For our part, we would have no hesitation in urging a total Presidential ban on production of toxins. All other questions aside, seeking another method seems clearly impractical. And as for those who urge continued production on the grounds that toxins are really chemical weapons rather than part of germ warfare, they should make plain to the American public the necessary consequences of such a decision. Any move to retain toxins in our arsenal would in effect undo the President's ban on germ warfare, practically and in the eyes of the world; the facilities to produce toxins are in most cases precisely those required to produce live poisons themselves. A decision to continue the production of toxins, then, would mean leaving our capacity for biological warfare almost intact. If we are to pay more than lip service to the cause of humanity, and if the Administration's word is to be taken seriously abroad, we should renounce warfare by toxin as well as warfare by germ. Any other course would be seen only as an affront to enlightened world opinion, an affront that would be impossible to defend.

SISTER SPEAKS UP

Since the Council, individual nuns, even whole communities of nuns have broken dramatically from constrictive modes of the past. But few have done so with larger right and potential significance than the collective sisterhoods of Louisiana, who have put clergy of that state on notice that they will be playing no game of compromises on school desegregation. Twenty-three religious orders of women have affirmed that they will withdraw from any parish which does not accept and abide by their insistence that Catholic schools be integrated.

The catalyst for the declaration is, of course, the integration-now decree of the High Court, with the correlative possibility that Catholic schools, as private institutions, could become havens for those seeking to avoid the inevitable in public schools. "As Christians, we can no longer contribute to or permit ourselves to be instruments in the preparation of racial segregation, which is unjust and immoral," the Sisters declared.

In a sense, their statement is an indictment, as it casts doubts on the authenticity of the dedication of the church in Louisiana to an integrated society. In kindred sense, this is unfortunate, since the church there, particularly under the late Archbishop Rummel, was responsible for some important break-throughs. But pockets of intransigence obviously remain, and it is these with which the Sisters will have no further truck. Nor should they.

Morality and justice are on the side of the Sisters, and for this reason their declaration is welcome. It is welcome also for the further evidence it furnishes that women religious have shed old reticences about public controversy and are willing to act as a pressure group to sensitize the witness of the church. The ancient subservience of the Sisters had its conveniences—advantages, too—but it was never a healthy thing, for it led inevitably to situations such as that in certain Southern school systems where apostolates could be compromised as a result of Sisters having to accede to the will of another who was more responsive to dictates of custom than the demands of total justice.

Matters have been changing gradually for Sisters the past few years, and the day is coming when they will be out from under all unfair arrangements. What is encouraging is that nuns are not content to finger their beads awaiting the great day, that they're willing to press aggressively for it by assuming prerogatives which will be part and parcel of that existence.

The National Coalition of American Nuns, for instance, is urging Mississippi Sisters to "resist, to protest and to strike" rather than accept into their schools white children who belong to any plan to circumvent integration laws. Bishop Joseph Brunini of Natchez-Jackson has taken a courageous stand in recent integration developments there, but here again there are clergy who would resist his lead. It is right that Sisters should say they won't be party to the proceedings.

A MATTER OF PRIORITIES

Perhaps the usual discussion of national priorities is too abstract, or is largely seen by middle-class power-holders as aimed at benefiting the other fellow. Consider, then, a specific fact: Dr. Sidney Farber, past president of the American Cancer Society, believes: "We are so close to a cure for cancer. We lack only the will and the kind of money and comprehensive planning that went into putting a man on the moon."

As the Citizens' Committee for the Conquest of Cancer has been pointing out in national advertising, more than 318,000 Americans died of cancer last year. At the same time, the United States spent more every day on

$24,847 TO GO!

By February 2nd, some 2,151 subscribers had sent Continuation Fund contributions and pledges amounting to $21,153. To reach the $46,000 needed to assure *Commonweal's* continued publication, we urge subscribers who have not yet participated in the drive to send their contributions, large or small, to 232 Madison Avenue, New York 10016, at their earliest convenience.

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military affairs than we spend in a year on cancer research. The goal suggested by the Committee is at once simple and breathtaking: an all-out drive to try to conquer cancer by America's 200th birthday. What a great way to celebrate! On the other hand, if there is no new cure, one out of four Americans now alive, 51,000,000 people, will suffer from cancer of some sort; one out of six, 34,000,000 people, will die of cancer. The next time there is discussion of your tax dollar and re-ordering national priorities, you might think of this.

Requiem For an Anarchist

His latest leaflet, with the headline "Thou Shalt Not Kill!" and a scribbled note on the back ("Good TV coverage this campaign—Love, Ammon"), arrived on January 9. Like many previous flyers, it announced a protest against capital punishment: "Picketing the Board of Pardons at the Capitol [in Salt Lake City] at noon, from Monday through Friday, January 5 to February 5, 1970."

But within the week, the local newspaper carried a brief excerpt from the *Times* obituary, saying that Ammon Hennacy, graying *enfant terrible* and one-man revolution, at 77, was dead.

We met four years ago when he and Joan arrived to stay with us during a swing east, before the closing of Joe Hill House. Although I had read his column in the *Catholic Worker,* which he served as Associate Editor during the fifties, my knowledge of his goings and doings came principally from the first edition of his own story, *The Autobiography of a Catholic Anarchist,* an item in a bibliography in Mark Harris' dissertation on Randolph Bourne. Ammon loved to repeat Bourne's famous statement "War is the health of the State." He had given his bed over to Bourne when the social and literary critic visited Madison, Wisconsin, in 1915; they shared a common ideology, socialist and anarchist, even in those pre-World War I days, before Ammon served his first prison term for refusing to go to the army in 1917.

Since that initial sentence, Ammon had been returned to jail over thirty times: in Atlanta, where a note from a fellow anarchist, Alexander Berkman, restored his courage and determination to live, even in "the hole"; in New York City, at the request of various Roman Catholic clergy, for selling the *Catholic Worker* outside downtown churches after Mass; in Arizona, while picketing against war bases and atomic blasts in the desert. His descriptions of these experiences have become standard anthology pieces on anarchism and non-violence in America, particularly that initial journey to Christian anarchism made many years ago:

"I had passed through the idea of killing myself. This was an escape, not any solution to life. The remainder of my two years in solitary must result in a clear-cut plan whereby I could go forth and be a force in the world. . . . Gradually I came to gain a glimpse of what Jesus meant when he said, The Kingdom of God must be in everyone: in the deputy, the warden, in the rat and the pervert—and now I came to know it in myself. . . . To change the world by bullets or ballots was a useless procedure. . . . Therefore the only revolution worthwhile was the one-man revolution within the heart. Each one would make this by himself and not need to wait on a majority."

The uncompromised principles and the practical wisdom, the idea and the deed, appear side by side in his autobiography, as they do in the book he was writing at the time of his death: a collection of portraits of *his* fifteen great Americans from John Woolman, Tom Paine, and Thomas Jefferson (the only President in the group) to Malcolm X, Helen Demoskoff, and Dorothy Day, with selections from their writings and reflections on their lives and times. One of the best tributes to him would be for his friends and admirers to see that that book is brought to a large and appreciative reading public. His associates at the *Worker* and in Salt Lake, I am sure, are working on it already.

In the meantime, we are left with memories: the sight of the gray-haired, slightly stooped, but still virile man in a dark shirt, with a Western, Indian-decorated tie (the picture in the recent bulletin of the War Resisters League, which named him Pacifist of the year last spring); the witty, even bawdy remarks, barbed comments and critiques of friends and enemies, particularly when the former didn't measure up to his (or was it *their*) principles. He could excuse ignorance; but once a man drew the line, Ammon expected him to hold fast. And he always cautioned people against drawing it too fast and then "chickening out." He thought Eugene Debs was probably the greatest American, but he admired several of the younger radicals too. At Christmas, he always sent cards to young men in prison for conscience's sake, from Fort Dix stockade to Sandstone and beyond.

It would be ridiculous, however, to romanticize him. Ammon was a crusty old Irishman—cantankerous, gregarious, stubborn—constantly confronting his listener with his attitude on diet ("on fish, flesh, or fowl") or his own favorite sayings on sometimes obtuse subjects. He advised reading the morning paper "to find out what the bastards are up to today." Even last spring, he carried through a busy schedule of a radio-talk show, a peaceful protest supporting the Catonsville 9, and a speech before local college students, in one day. He liked poetry, and he talked precisely about books he had read in any discipline.

He is a chapter in the history of American radicalism, indomitable, singular, humane. I loved him.

MICHAEL TRUE

(Michael True is a member of the Department of English, Assumption College, Worcester, Mass.)

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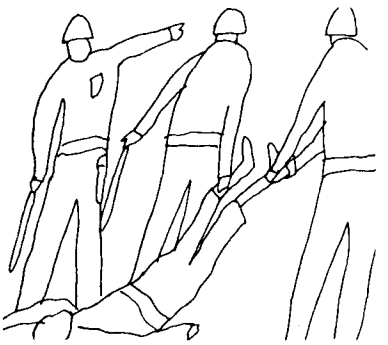
Father Schall Against the Wall



A good part of last week's *Commonweal* was devoted to an article, "God as Caesar," by James V. Schall. Father Schall's argument was sophisticated and, I believe, sophistical. At first glance, his article seems calm, pragmatic, perhaps extraordinarily dispassionate and coolly resigned, given the catastrophe he predicts. At second glance—at *my* second glance, anyway—the underlying note sounds panicky, the important evidence is either wanting or exaggerated, and the point of view is doctrinaire.

Father Schall's contention is that the liberal, limited state is on the verge of being destroyed by "religious" righteousness, which, in refusing Caesar his limited sphere, ultimately sets itself up as a new Caesar now zealously claiming a monopoly on morality, and the right to intervene as it sees fit to create a new world or a brave new world. He begins by taking an ironic glance at the self-satisfaction with which American Catholics viewed the Conciliar statements on church and state—and how swiftly those statements, or at least that satisfaction, became irrelevant to the major world trends. What Father Schall does, however, is to link up the old debates about church-state separation with all the new debates about morality and society, dissent and consensus, neutrality and commitment which currently rack our institutions, from the university to the Federal government.

This is a good beginning, and it is a shame that Father Schall slides downhill from there into a standard attack on the New Left. I should not say standard, for the standard version warns (not without basis) that New Left agitation will bring on a right-wing reaction. Father Schall, on the contrary, believes that it is the militant forces of the young opponents of the war in Vietnam, racism, and imperialism who will soon create nothing less than a totalitarian America.

We are offered two pieces of evidence as to the character of these militants. One, a girl raises her fist to some civil servants and calls them "pigs." Two, a reporter for *The Economist* constructs an analogy between the New Left and the "dreariest old Nazism." Father Schall considers this citation particularly significant because it comes "from a source sympathetic to America." He does not add that is the America of Lyndon Johnson *The Economist* is sympathetic to, nor that the magazine has been one of the fiercest supporters of the Vietnam war.

The evidence is a bit slim. Not all was clenched fists and "pigs" at the peace marches. The New Left and the "movement" are various, (Father Schall is not above taking advantage of this fact when he first attacks absolute pacifism and then takes the anti-war movement to task for not being really anti-war.) And where do all the other opponents of the war, the clean-for-Gene's and the suburban parents (who may clench their fists from time to time, in frustration if not ideology), where do they fit into Father Schall's scheme? Are they, too, threats to the Republic? Even the "revolutionary" wing of the New Left is in tatters, fragmentized, riddled with agents, harassed by the government, its telephones tapped, its offices officially vandalized and its more antic factions industriously losing supporters. Father Schall's projections reveal more of his personal fears than public facts.

My point is not to defend the New Left or other militants—enough of that argument—but to indicate the abstract, doctrinaire and a-historical character of arguments like Father Schall's: the very characteristics so often attributed, with some justice, to his opponents. He talks, for instance, of the liberal state, now so fragile. It seems he means America. Apart from the fact that Mr. Mitchell of the Justice Department may shortly make us wish that the state were more fragile than it supposedly is, America has never been the Platonic model of a liberal state that Father Schall implies. Historians have pointed to the overwhelming philosophical-political consensus the nation long enjoyed. Theologians have noted the phenomenon of a "civil religion" which has succeeded the identification of America with Protestantism. Political scientists have begun to recognize the depth of anti-Communism as a post-war national ideology, an "enthusiasm" promoted by the government, and no less zealous than anything we see today. In speculating whether a state can exist without a moral-ideological-religious commitment, Father Schall poses one of the stickiest problems for liberal theory. But in suggesting that what is happening now is an "onslaught" of untamed religiosity on a state previously pure of such enthusiasm; in ignoring the political passions and religious fervor which have surrounded all great public change (I suggest Father Schall examine the agitation and threats of civil war which accompanied most important changes in that most "unrevolutionary" of nations, 19th-century Britain); in stressing only the enthusiasm of the left and not of the right, Father Schall has done a disservice to the important questions he raised. PETER STEINFELS

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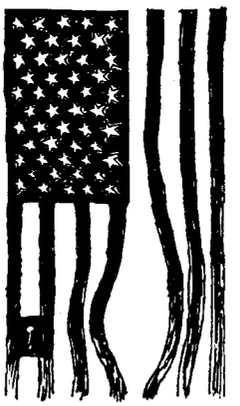
THE PRELATE AND THE PRISONERS

Pilgrimage of a Third World bishop

WILLIAM J. DAVIS



"Refusal to serve in the armed forces of the United States, regardless of the consequences of humiliation, jail, persecution, is a very efficacious form of protest." Not a very revolutionary statement. But quite surprising, coming as it does from a Roman Catholic Bishop.

Because of his outspoken opposition to the Vietnam war and to all forms of militarism, Bishop Antulio Parrilla, S. J., of Puerto Rico, was invited to tour the U.S. prisons, both military and civil, consoling prisoners in this country, and talking to minority groups. The invitation came from peace groups, mainly Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, who felt that it would be very appropriate during the Christmas season to have someone visit the soldiers of peace, So much the better that the visitor is a bishop, a voice from the Third World, and an American citizen.

"I hesitated to accept CALCAV's sponsorship," he told the *Chicago Daily News,* ". . . my position was more radical than theirs and I didn't want to compromise them." Radical positions come easily to him "because the Gospel is radical." And Bishop Parrilla is a man of the Gospel.

As a bishop, he is as powerless in official circles as the people to whom he ministers. He has no diocese, no vote in the Puerto Rican Council of Bishops. But no matter. "I was layman before I was a bishop. I shall never forget that." Like many other Puerto Ricans—who can be drafted even though they can't vote ("taxation in blood, without representation," the Bishop calls it)—he once served in the U.S. Army and understands the military mind.

From December 18 to January 18 Bishop Parrilla made his nationwide prison pilgrimage. I accompanied him. We started in Seattle, down the West Coast, to Kansas, the upper Mid-West, and finally the East Coast. Out of twenty-five military and civil prisons that we tried to enter, we successfully gained access to eighteen.

As with so many aspects of the penal system, visiting rules and exceptions to visiting rules can be quite arbitrary. After initial refusals, we got into the stockade of the San Francisco Presidio because the commanding officer, Col. Guy de Young, had once served in Puerto Rico and was sympathetic toward a Puerto Rican bishop; we were finally permitted to see Black Panther leader Bobby Seale in the "Hall of Justice" in San Francisco because Sheriff Matthew Carberry had gone to a Jesuit school and we were Jesuits; at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Col. Wilbur Dillon suddenly flexed all the inflexible rules when I asked to use a telephone to call an interested Senator; in Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, authorities relented only when a local lawyer with clients in the stockade threatened the base with a court injunction if he could not interview his clients in our presence; and at Cook County Jail in Chicago, probably the worst installation we saw on the entire trip, access was gained through an elderly black woman who is friendly with some of the officials.

Usually a visiting clergyman in good standing has no trouble getting into such places if the chaplain recommends him. *A fortiori* a bishop. But *this* bishop is a little different. Out of step with most U.S. and Puerto Rican bishops, he openly advocates draft resistance, pacification and non-violent action, Puerto Rican independence, and the removal of nuclear weapons from Puerto Rican soil. He rejects the "just war theory," has identified him-

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self with the poor and the powerless, and he believes that dissension should be a common thing in the church. "I consider dissension, instead of violating unity, doing the opposite—contributing to the search for the total truth. So I feel individual bishops should speak according to their conscience against the war."

As the trip progressed, it became quite clear that he was being discriminated against because of his anti-war views and his sponsorship by peace groups. Most depressing, however, was the attitude of some chaplains, especially military chaplains. They were usually a positive obstacle to our entry. Some were downright hostile. Even the friendliest made it clear that they would not buck "higher orders." There were hints that the refusal had come from the Pentagon itself.

The suggestion to army chaplains that they are army first and chaplain second was not kindly received. Yet that is clearly the mind of the prisoners. "Who wants to talk to a man who is army, especially if your objection is to what the army is doing?" Chaplains who are gung-ho in spirit make little effort to conceal their hostility toward conscientious objectors. But even a genius and a saint would have difficulty overcoming identification with the forces of death and oppression brought on by the chaplain's uniform, commission, and salary. And not every chaplain is a genius or a saint.

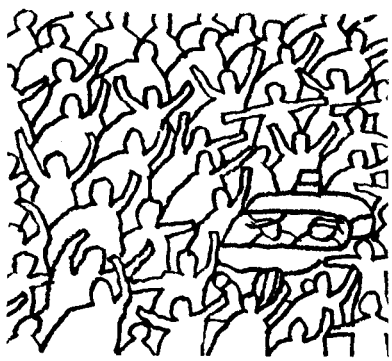
Jail-visiting frequently thrust us into the struggles of the imprisoned minorities outside of prisons. Black Panther headquarters were visited, Puerto Rican Young Lords, Chicanos (or Mexican Americans), even the Indians at Alcatraz. While Bishop Parrilla did not condone violence anywhere, he never condemned the violence of oppressed groups without condemning even more strenuously the violence of the status quo. "I do back the Black Panthers' right to survive as a group in the face of persecution. They resort to violence, not because they want violence, but because they have been pushed to violence."

En Route

On Christmas Eve we concelebrated Mass in Spanish with the poor of San Francisco's Mission District; Christmas morning, the Alcatraz Indians took us in their own boat to "The Rock" for another Mass, celebrated in the old chapel above the main cell block, and that afternoon Cesar Chavez and the farm workers welcomed us warmly for a third Mass at Delano. The Bishop and Cesar discussed their common interest in cooperatives. Later, as we drove toward Los Angeles, the Bishop stated that he would not hesitate to ordain Chavez since he is obviously both the social and religious leader of the community.

In Los Angeles, a Mass of solidarity with the struggling Chicano community was celebrated by the Bishop outside St. Basil's Church, a new $2 million edifice, while Cardinal McIntyre was pontificating within. Only myself and Father Mark Day of Delano concelebrated—the fear of suspension paralyzed several other local priests who wished to join us.

The trip may seem to have been scattered over several purposes—prison-visiting, war resistance, minority groups—but one thing that this pilgrimage brought sharply into focus was the interrelationship of these seemingly disparate movements. When one gets into the prison scene, one is immediately thrust into the problems of the minorities. In Chicago's Cook County Jail, for example, nearly 90% of the inmates are black, Latin, or Indian. One searches hard to find an obvious white, and then it is usually a poor white. Like it or not, peace, prisoners, and minority oppression are all of a piece.



Pull a thread of the tapestry anywhere and you are immediately zapped into other parts of the picture.

The Bishop himself, as a member of a minority group, knows what it means to be subjected to a colonial system which exploits under the guise of law and order and which follows its economic interests with its military might. He has an instant rapport with oppressed minorities, whether inside jail or out. Very often the initial hostility which we sensed when walking into a jail with the military brass or with the warden and chaplains was immediately dissipated once the prisoners had the chance to talk to him privately and find out why he was there and what he represented.

"I am particularly interested in conscientious objectors in prison," he told the press. "I want to console them spiritually. They are not common criminals. They are political prisoners because they protest laws they consider unconstitutional. They oppose the established order."

We wondered about the press. Many of the incidents of the trip seemed to be newsworthy, but in spite of advance press releases, very little appeared in print. The *National Catholic Reporter* was just about the only national coverage. On more than one occasion newsmen told us, after long interviews or shots for TV failed to appear, that their material was being killed higher-up.

The most common complaint of the prisoners was not that of physical brutality, but rather the generally dehumanizing conditions. No one believes every story he hears from a prisoner. Nevertheless, there are enough

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instances of persecution and brutality that only the most naive would discount them altogether. This is especially true in the case of black and other minority groups. We ourselves witnessed a deputy sheriff refer to a Spanish prisoner as "one of those cop-killers," a distressing approach since the man had not yet been convicted of any crime. We speculated on the treatment he might receive from someone who believed so passionately in the American way.

Some complaints came from people of high credibility, the prisoners of conscience who freely chose jail rather than violate the truth. Others admitted that they dare not speak to us for fear of reprisals. Bob Graf, one of the Milwaukee 14, discovered how arbitrary retaliation could be. One day when his wife, who was pregnant, was visiting him at Waupun Prison, the baby began to move. She placed Bob's hand on her stomach so that he might feel the movement of their child. For this he was given three days in solitary confinement on bread and water for "manhandling his wife."

We visited six prisons in the Milwaukee area just to catch up with eight members of the Milwaukee 14. Although prison officials everywhere insist that there is no such thing as a political prisoner, nevertheless it is clear that they are keeping the Milwaukee 14 separated for political reasons. But they remain unbroken, unrepentant. They are free men in spite of the bars. The Bishop told the press later that he felt prisoners of conscience are the saints of our day.

Many of them clearly perceive how their action, their *present* action, is not wasted time but a vital contribution toward justice and peace. I believe it was Larry Rosebaugh who remarked that prison is, after all, only a facsimile of society at large, and that one has to work at being free, whether inside or out. After meeting priests of the caliber of Tony Mullney, Jim Harney, and Larry Rosebaugh, all members of the Milwaukee 14, Bishop Parrilla remarked to the press: "More priests should go to prison because when you have a lot of priests in prison it means something in the system is rotten."

In spite of the brutality and brutalizing conditions we met, there were tender moments as well, especially as suffering and struggling people met a Bishop who is so simply and unassumingly Christian. A case in point was our visit with Jim Forest at Waupun. Jim was immensely grateful. When he entered the room, face beaming and more boyish now that his mustache has been stripped away, he volunteered, "I just never thought I would see the day when a Catholic bishop would visit me in jail, especially when I'm here for peace efforts."

After a banquet of brotherhood, the visit ended with a curious but touching blend of old church tradition and new warmth. Jim himself describes both visit and final farewell in a letter to his wife Linda:

"Walking to the chapel yesterday for that meeting . . . . my head was full of wonder at the realization that a bishop has identified himself so simply and completely with the struggle of the people for justice and community with each other. Nine years ago, as full of joy as I was to be received into the Church and as grateful as I was for the existence of the Catholic Worker and other communities of lived and applied Christianity, I never dreamed that I would live to see a bishop even quietly making the rounds to political prisoners. And what a fine, solid man he is—the first bishop I've met whose community with the apostles is expressed in a form of authority that doesn't need to lord it over others but comes simply in the presence that is in him.

"The last moment of the visit was funny. We had all stood up . . . and I blurted out, 'It may seem old fashioned, but I want to ask for your blessing.' And he said, 'My blessing! I want also to give you my embrace!' But by that time I was nine-tenths on my knees and so we had the most peculiar embrace, me reaching up and him down. I picture it as a Mack Sennett-Marx Brothers image of the state the church is in—half way between kneeling and embracing and ending up like a Keystone Kop collision. But somehow it was okay. I carry the visit in that part of memory reserved for First Communions."

Thus, the hardened criminal. Jim had a card with him and asked the Bishop to write something on it for a keepsake. The words Bishop Parrilla wrote to Jim Forest perhaps epitomize his feelings about many prisoners he met: "You are a great encouragement for us all who are also prisoners of the establishment."

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SR. MAURA, S.S.N.D.

GRIEF

Who will go down
to that ocean floor?

to that mystery
less known

than craters
of the moon?

who will dive
gently

into that sea
of your tears

on whose shore
they stand

nudging your heart
with careless foot.

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REVOLUTION ON THE BURMA TRAIL?

U Nu is determined to overthrow the regime

VED P. NANDA

In October, 1969, a soft-spoken Eastern mystic-politician, dressed in his native *longyi*, bowed a Buddhist greeting to a Denver University audience, and made a unique and impassioned plea for American support in fomenting revolution in his nation. The speaker, U Nu, 62-year-old former Prime Minister of Burma (from 1948 to 1962), is challenging the incumbent military regime of strong-man General Ne Win. In a swift *coup d'état* in March, 1962 Ne Win seized power, jailed U Nu and other political leaders, and suspended the Burmese constitution.

Released in October, 1966, U Nu was permitted to leave Burma in April, 1969. Since then he has taken asylum in Bangkok, and has completed a global trip through India, Thailand, England, U.S., Japan, and Hong Kong, announcing to "friends and foes alike" that he is capable, ready and willing to lead a revolutionary movement to overthrow Ne Win's regime of "hate and oppression" and restore parliamentary democracy and constitutional government to Burma. He is determined to accomplish these objectives by any means, even by force, be it necessary. Moral and material support from any source, he says, will be welcome. U Nu, of course, claims that he is still legally the Prime Minister of Burma, and that Ne Win is a mere usurper.

The outcome of U Nu's venture is not easy to predict. And if the country in question is like Burma—which since 1962 has virtually become a hermit state by driving out resident foreign nationals, sealing its borders, and effectively shutting itself off from the outside world—it is all the more difficult to size up its internal political processes and to gauge the probable impact of external pressures on its domestic politics.

Until recently, a foreigner's visit to Burma was strictly limited to 24-hours in Rangoon, but since August, 1969, tourists are offered a government supervised package-tour—for 72 hours!

I went back to Burma in September, 1969. (Earlier, in September, 1967, I had spent 24 hours in Rangoon.) Successfully avoiding the package-tour, I made arrangements on my own to travel by air to Pagan and Mandalay, and to take the train back from Mandalay to Rangoon. I met several former political leaders and government officials, leading Burmese citizens of Indian extraction, students, and teachers. Subsequently, a two-day visit with U Nu in October in Denver added perspective to my understanding and appreciation of Burma's enormous problems.

Burma presents a unique model of how not to do things if you want to succeed, especially if you are pursuing socialism. The "Burmese Way to Socialism" means, in effect, a wholesale nationalization of land, banking, and almost all trade and industry. Private foreign investment and aid are not allowed. Except for the official Burmese Socialist Program Party, all political parties are banned. The State owns all of the means of production; army agencies, bureaucratized in the worst sense, encumbered by inflexible procedures and red tape, run Burma's commerce and industry. Most army officers are ill equipped for their jobs. They lack adequate education, technical skills, administrative experience, and even ideological motivation. The fact is that the military government proclaimed socialism as a slogan and started lining up ideology to give substance to the slogan.

Any gains under the military regime are offset not only by a drastic decline in agricultural and industrial production, but by an overall slump in Burma's economy. The economic picture remains bleak. Foreign trade has declined; exports have fallen significantly; stringent import restrictions continue; commodity distribution apparatus is seriously deficient; inflation is rampant; and acute shortages of consumer goods are commonplace. Even daily necessities such as salt, cooking oil, clothing, soap, simple medicines, razor blades, and in cities, even rice, are constantly in short supply. Corruption and embezzlement are widespread; flourishing black-market operations, and large scale smuggling (of goods from other countries, and of gems and other precious stones to foreign lands) are serious headaches.

People form long queues, waiting patiently outside state-run stores, "people's shops," before the shops open, and when they do, goods are almost always in short supply. Would-be customers shrug their shoulders and walk away, displaying an unusual quality of fatalism.

It almost seems that the majority of the Burmese people are deliberately causing the economic disruption by passive resistance, but upon questioning, government officials would rather disparage this notion. Nevertheless, they do concede that there is a general lack of support

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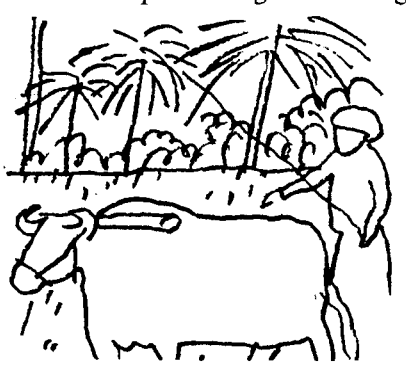
from workers, peasants, and even civil servants, and admit that the solution is not economic, but political.

Although the excuse for the military coup in 1962 was the allegedly imminent threat to Burma's unity by the secessionist demands of Shan insurgents and other minorities, there is presently almost no representation from ethnic groups such as Chins, Kachins, Karens, Mons, and Nagas in high governmental positions. And these minorities are in a challenging mood—dissident, discontented, restless and unreconciled.

The simmering discontent is further exploited by Communist insurgents. The B.C.P. (Burmese Communist Party) celebrated its 30th anniversary on August 15, 1969, by sabotaging a freight train between Mandalay and Rangoon. Of late, though, the B.C.P. has been losing ground both militarily and politically. Although the party still offers some resistance in the Irrawady Delta area, its ranks have been substantially depleted by defections, capture, casualties, and internal turmoil and purges.

Recent reports indicate stepped up activities by Red China along its 1,400 mile-long border with Burma. This leads to the question: if the Chinese are intensifying the rebel activities in the border areas, what are their political motives? It may be that they are trying to boost the sagging morale of the pro-Peking White Flag faction of



the Communist Party. Or perhaps they may be putting pressure on Ne Win so as to keep him moving toward a more stringent policy of state socialism.

Until 1967, Sino-Burmese relations were cordial and proper; the Burmese had shown utmost deference to the Big Brother, but anti-Chinese riots in the summer of 1967 in Rangoon and other cities changed the picture entirely. Peking was indignant. It canceled its aid to Burma, and started branding Ne Win's government "racist, fascist, and reactionary." The Chinese technicians left Rangoon amid loud chanting of Mao's sayings. Reporting the departure of these Chinese "heroes," the New China News Agency protested against the Burmese indiscretion of drowning Mao's quotations by starting up the engines of six jets that happened to be nearby.

U Nu rejects both Communism and Ne Win's Socialism. He considers parliamentary democracy and private enterprise with governmental control over some key industries to be the answer to the current economic and political malaise. He would give more autonomy to the minorities, creating two more states, one each for the Arkanese and the Mons. Also he would call a constitutional convention to resolve the conflicts on allocation of powers between the states and the central government.

Burma is at a crossroad. For the first time since 1962, a leader of stature and with proven charismatic power is challenging the repressive military regime.

"They [the military] have guns. We [the Burmese people] will have to fight them with guns," U Nu says. Thus, he has ruled out passive resistance.

But will the Burmese people rise in arms against Ne Win? Is a united opposition movement of the insurgents, dissidents in the Army, and the discontented civilians possible? How would Ne Win respond? (Presently, rumors are heard in Rangoon that Ne Win, who has not been in good health, has a chartered plane ready to flee from Burma if U Nu returns.) Would he set up a broad-based government? Would he reverse his ruinous socialist policies?

There are no definite answers. But we do know that a majority of the military leaders firmly believe they can govern better than the civilians. Their stake in maintaining themselves in power is obvious. Ne Win has rejected all proposals for liberalization, including those for a return to parliamentary democracy and the establishment of a "4-legged economy"—state, co-operative, private, and mixed.

Already ridden with factionalism and parochialism, the country might have to face further disruption. If this conflict were to take place. China's attitude would be unpredictable. Although Mao and Chou En-lai are among U Nu's personal friends, the Peking regime might look with disfavor upon his returning to power, for he is perhaps the only person who can unify the country.

The U.S. and other Western nations recognize the Ne Win regime and have diplomatic relations with it. Realizing this, U Nu, is his recent tour, made it quite clear that he was not actively soliciting help from any government sources, but was rather appealing to U.S. and other Western nations to refrain from giving military assistance to Ne Win.

Concerned with Burma's deteriorating relations with its neighbors, U Nu envisages a positive program of Burma's active participation in regional development measures, while still pursuing a foreign policy of non-alignment. He is also preparing a blueprint of economic and political measures he would put into effect once he returned to power.

It might be that in the near future, Burma will find itself in the throes of an internal conflict, the outcome of which is entirely unpredictable; it may perhaps bring Burma out of its self-imposed isolation. The West should hope for Burma to pursue its policy of non-alignment; its well-wishers pray for an end to the hardships and deprivations.

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THE NEW NEWSREEL

Documentaries for the Movement

PHIL TRACY

Back in the days when two Flash Gordon features on a Saturday afternoon drew a line of kids outside the movie house, the newsreel was considered the worst part of the show. I think they used to call it "News of the World" and as soon as we heard the opening trumpets that accompanied each installment, half the theater would get up and march back to the candy counter. They ran five minutes, were loud as hell and were full of beauty contests, high-diving tournaments and Douglas MacArthur returning to claim the Philippines. What was worse, they weren't in color.

I haven't seen an old newsreel for several years now so maybe the company went broke. I can't say that I miss them. But if the old newsreels are indeed dead and buried, the name lives on in an underground group whose works you're not likely to see in any movie theater in town.

The Newsreel is a collection, a combine, a commune of people who make radical films. The subjects vary from anti-war demonstrations to organizing a Puerto Rican community, but the message is always the same. The Revolution is coming, which side are you on? Most of the film-makers are under thirty. They are bound together by their work and their beliefs. They make their own films —shoot, edit, and print them. They also exhibit, rent and otherwise distribute them across the country to college groups and underground communities.

Like many in "the Movement," members of the Newsreel prefer group identity to individual recognition. They see the world has a way of buying you off or wearing you down. Or, if you have any talent, of inflating your ego in order to dull the cutting edge of your outrage. They join a group to protect themselves against such devices and they enjoy the anonymity and protection it offers them. People are introduced and referred to on a first-name basis only. There is no leader or company president of the Newsreel. All decisions are made by mutual agreement. Their films carry no individual credits and the idea of personal artistry is considered bourgeois chauvinism.

There are eight semi-autonomous chapters of the Newsreel spread across the country. Each chapter decides what kind of films it will make and what each film will say. After a film is made every other chapter is given a chance to screen it and decide whether the film should be placed in the permanent catalogue. If the film is blackballed by any one chapter, the title is not included in the catalogue or promoted by the discussion teams which are sent out along with a projector to each Newsreel screening. Since most films have a running time of ten or fifteen minutes, they are usually rented in packages of three or four and presented as a program. A supplement to the catalogue describes one program: "On the community and national level a characteristic of capitalism is its disregard for the needs of the people. This program of films shows the eventuality of armed struggle as the means by which the people can begin to take control of that which is rightfully theirs."

Blackballed films get that way by not having the correct ideological emphasis. One memo criticizing a particular film referred to its failure to "demonstrate accurately the true state of oppression minority groups experience under the capitalistic system" or depict fully "the role of women in the coming armed struggle for liberation." The memo reads like a series of 1930 clichés knit together by such Movement slogans as "right on" or "up front."

While much of their rhetoric comes from Karl Marx their outlook on life is closer to the Black Panthers. Panther literature and posters are in abundance along with three or four pictures of Cleaver and Seale. There are no guns on the walls, and the subject of militant violence does not come up often, but a heavy fear of the cops hangs in the office. The loft that the group works out of is located in the heart of the garment district. They say they are listed in the phone book but the telephone company denies it (which proves nothing since an information operator once informed me she had no listing for the Public Library). The windows are covered by heavy black shades ("for screenings as well as security"), and a sign on the inside of the door says it must be kept locked at all times. There are pictures on the wall identifying plain clothes cops who have posed in the past as radicals. "This is a pig. Remember his face!"

Somebody once defined a radical as one who is seeking change by attacking the root of the problem. The members of the Newsreel are an especially thorough breed of radicals. They hate not only the roots of the system, they're also against each blossom and leaf. Their rage is directed far beyond the capitalistic system in general and includes the stores on Fifth Avenue, the radio and TV

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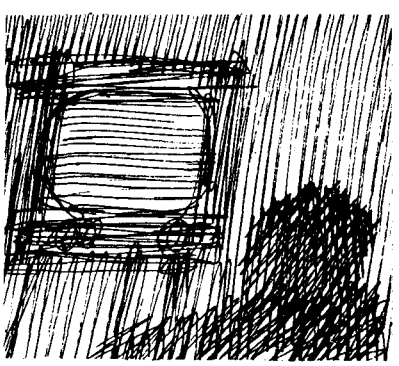
networks, the food in the supermarket, the cars on the street, art galleries, records and Vin Rosé.

While Vietnam is a constant topic of their conversation and their films, their greatest wrath is reserved for the film industry and New York's Lincoln Center. They see today's film culture as either idle entertainment for the moneyed elite or a ruthless reinforcer of the dominant culture. The former function is conducted in such culture outlets as Lincoln Center or the expensive movie house where high prices discriminate against the poor. The more insidious brainwashing is carried out by television.

People who work within the mass media are considered cultural prostitutes and political enemies no matter what personal philosophy they espouse. "All films are propaganda really," one young girl explained. "Something like 'The Graduate' has all kinds of implicit propaganda content—swimming pools, beautiful homes, a college education. Everything is designed to smother the reality of America and make rebellion seem like a childish adventure. People who make films like that are just as much the enemy as the USIA."

The Newsreel started in the fall of 1967 when some people got together and made a documentary about the March on the Pentagon. The idea was to offset the stand-



ard "on this hand . . . but on the other hand" type of coverage provided by the mass media. The group was formally created sometime in the early part of 1968. The March 1969 catalogue lists some 35 films produced by the group and 35 others which they distribute.

Finances are a subject people from the Newsreel do not readily discuss. Apparently each group gets to keep the money raised from the screening and collections in their area. The New York group is the oldest, makes more films than any of the other groups, and has more people "on staff." No explanation is given as to how the people who work for the Newsreel full-time manage such things as rent and food. Most of the money that comes into the office reportedly is used to purchase film supplies and equipment or pay for the production of additional prints of films already in the catalogue. Some people live in a communal apartment located a few blocks from the studio, and at present nobody sleeps on the premises except occasionally after a long night's work.

Most of the people who work for the Newsreel have had at least a passing acquaintance with the mass media, and a few have been deeply involved and highly successful artists. One girl explained the radicalization most of the people have undergone by saying: "Many of us started inside the media establishment. After a while we came to see that nothing truly revolutionary was going to come out of the system. So we began looking for alternate ways to use the medium without playing the role of the frustrated artist that the system wants us to play." Another member of the group who once worked for NBC's White Paper staff was more specific: "The process doesn't happen overnight. Your ideas change and as they become more radical they become less acceptable to the people you are working for. One day you notice you are not saying anything you believe any longer and then you have to decide whether you're going to go on being a liar for the money or find another way to live your life."

Apparently the group has undergone several changes in its brief two years of existence. The first films were rough and poorly reproduced. Today their films show little of this early sloppiness. Also there has been a definite shift away from the concept of radical artists' doing their thing for the Movement, and more emphasis on group effort.

I personally found the films I saw stringent, grating, and depressing, but then I'm a reporter and not a film critic. My idea of a good flick is Steve McQueen in "Bullitt" or Clint Eastwood in "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly," films my fiancée and Judith Crist have both taken great pains to point out are not considered screen classics. The Newsreel's films are not boring and much too loud to sleep through. The discussions held after the screening are structured to reinforce the messages of the films. Subtlety is a lost art among revolutionaries.

Yet it is difficult to fault them for achieving their own stated purpose. As one member of the group stated in an interview first published in *Film Quarterly*, "We want a form of propaganda that polarizes, angers, excites, for the purpose of discussion—a way of getting at people, not by making concessions to where they are, but by showing them where you are and then forcing them to deal with that, bringing out all their assumptions, their prejudices, their imperfect perceptions. You want to make films that unnerve, that shake assumptions, that threaten, that do not soft-sell, but hopefully explode like grenades in people's faces or open minds like a good can-opener."

This is where these people are at, cinemagraphic grenades and minds that can be opened like a can. If they were all alone then you might dismiss them as a lunatic fringe of nutty artists. But they are only a small part of a growing cadre whose handiwork was recently seen on the streets of Chicago and the Justice Department in Washington. Like it or not, they are part of what the future holds for us, and if anyone wants a glimpse at tomorrow's headlines they can see them at the Newsreel today. It doesn't make a pretty picture.

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THE STAGE

One of the perennial quarrels playwrights have with reviewers is that reviews are written too quickly, hard on the heels of the theatrical experience, and that the play does not have time to work its long-term will on the critic, coloring his initial reactions. It is a complaint that made sense in a tradition of adjectival reviewing ("sparkling"; "slow-moving") in which O'Neill, like Olsen and Johnson, was judged by first impact. But what happens to that legitimate beef in the face of shows like *Salvation* (at the Jan Hus Theatre) and *Stomp* (at the Public Theater)? The productions may hope to reach beyond the immediate performance—certainly the intention of the *Stomp* troupe is pedagogical—but the shows are designed for instant response. The reviewer probably should go white-hot to his typewriter and record his feelings. I have let the two shows lie around in my mind for a few weeks now; so I am stuck with ideas about them rather than visceral impressions. One thing that disappears, recollected in tranquility, is that odd double-vision experience in which one reacts fondly to a song or a line and at the same time recognizes it as an obvious cliché. The cliché remains—and both shows are rich with them—while the affection for it in presentation milks away. I recall preferring *Salvation* to *Stomp,* but I suspect, now, that it was a matter of priority. I saw *Salvation* first and may have developed an immunity to warm-wrapped bromides by the time I got to *Stomp*. Ordinarily, I would probably prefer the sense of genuine community in the *Stomp* company to the efficient ensemble of *Salvation,* the painful sincerity in *Stomp* to the slick knowingness of *Salvation*. But both shows, to go adjectival, are bright, lively, youthful . . . oh, you know the list.

There are similarities between the two shows. Both use a variety of standard theatrical tunes, usually masked by a rock beat, although *Salvation* edges toward gospel music, *Stomp* toward Nashville. Both make insistent use of noise, lights, frenetic movement. Although the two casts are very different, the attraction in both cases is in the youth and vitality of the performers. Nor do I mean to imply that they are a nice bunch of amateurish kids. The cast of *Salvation,* as the credits indicate (except for those performers who are following the new cute habit of supposedly funny vitae), are all experienced professionals. They vary in quality, of course. Peter Link, who wrote the show with C. C. Courtney, and Barry Bostwick, who filled in for Courtney when I saw the show, were both extremely good; by contrast, Boni Enten hammed so relentlessly that the charm of her first entrance turned into empty nervousness. For the *Stomp* cast, who still have the look of the Southern colleges from which they come, the professional quality of the performance lies not in their manner, happily, but in the precision with which they work—usually at a dead run—through a complicated pattern of lights, sound cues, playing areas. Since they think of themselves as a group, there are no names, no programs, presumably no desire for individual applause. Still, let me point to one skinny mouse of a blonde girl whose range and power belie her innocuous appearance.

Both shows—each in its own way—are doing the same thing, carrying on an identity search. A voice from the audience breaks into the opening number of *Salvation,* questioning the title, and then the performer storms onstage and turns the operation into a revival meeting. The conflict within the show is between the guilt-bearing religious figure (the denominations keep changing) and the young people who are both repelled by and attracted to him. Other forms of salvation—sex, dope—appear in some of the scenes and these, too, seem to be rejected. The recurring note is the need to grasp the moment as it comes and the final song, "Tomorrow Is the First Day of the Rest of My Life," suggests a self-made salvation of non-dependence. A parallel quest in *Stomp* tells the story of an ordinary American boy in terms of the *Stomp* "combine" (their word), group autobiography as representative man. There is a more specific sense of the oppressor here—the parent, the small-town mentality, the local and national power structure—but the same sense of experimentation, discovery, rejection can be seen. The self-made salvation in *Stomp* is finally communal. The targets are as predictable as a stand-up comedian's yock references and the solution as amorphous as the 1950's Broadway love curtain, acceptable only because there is musical accompaniment.

Where the two shows finally differ is in their attitude toward their audiences and their material. *Salvation* in its good-hearted way presumably wants to shock (there is a ludicrous number in which the performers wander the stage muttering sex words), but it only awakens the audience's indulgence. It is a typical case of *épatez le bourgeois* in which the bourgeois stampede the box-office and embrace their tormentors. It is a lovable hit, like *Hair* and *Your Own Thing*. If the show had any teeth, success has pulled them (that metaphor is probably the result of my seeing *Salvation* while the dental convention was in town, but let it stand). There is finally cynicism in the innocence of *Salvation.*

By contrast, *Stomp* is more naive and more politically aware. It is as relentlessly wholesome and together-y as a youth fellowship meeting. Although it willfully divides the audience into three groups, depending on the answer to two questions (did you take part in the October Moratorium? do you recognize this rock group?), its aim is to bring radical, liberal and conservative together. One way presumably is through audience participation. Not only are members of the audience asked to sing, to move from

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place to place, to dance, but the performance itself is turned into a group discussion in which the airing of private and national grievances is presumably a step toward health. An obvious plant, an unlikely lady who mouths every conservative platitude, allows the master-of-ceremonies to work his way to his simple sermon. That touch of neatness aside, the discussion is genuine—which means—or did the night I saw the show—well-meaning chaos. It was this that sent me from the theater in deep depression. The best intentions of the company only convinced me that, if group action is necessary for survival, we are all doomed—and I am ordinarily a black optimist.

Salvation and *Stomp* in retrospect—show biz, on one hand, and on the other, skit night at the church convention followed by an open discussion of ISSUES. There is the other, the immediate impact of both shows. Better go look for yourself.

GERALD WEALES

BOOKS

An honorable old man in a world of obsessed young adults

Mr. Sammler's Planet

SAUL BELLOW

Viking, $6.95

KEITH OPDAHL

Like *Herzog, Mr. Sammler's Planet* is something of a cultural event. The ideas in it are magnificent. And yet . . . I have reservations. For the first time, really, the ideas in a Bellow novel overshadow the tale. Many readers will be happy with this, for the ideas are timely, but I miss his usual story.

The subject of *Mr. Sammler's Planet* is the subject of all of Bellow's fiction: crime and guilt. Remember Joseph's crime of withdrawal from his fellows? Leventhal's crime against Allbee? Henderson's crime against the cook? Heroes overwhelmed by guilt. When Herzog lowers the gun outside of Madeleine's apartment, and when the police court frees him (on a different charge, but imaginatively the same), the spell is broken, the hero is freed. And so Mr. Sammler, having been the victim of the Nazis' murderous intent, has taken a life, has crawled to light from beneath the bodies of his fellows, including his wife's, and has killed, joyfully, to survive. He thinks of it often, he tells us, but not brokenly. He has remained sane in the midst of violence.

Why would Bellow pick a man over 70 years old as his protagonist? The answer lies in Mr. Sammler's diagnosis of our troubled time. It is only recently, says Mr. Sammler, that man has been freed from the old slaveries. Uncertain in his freedom, man wallows in what he believes to be his humanity, the source of individuality—tears, sex, anger, personality. He rejects all limits on desire, and having lost perspective is maddened by his failure to consume and be all. The result is excess, desperation, monstrosity.

Mr. Sammler prefers limit, duty, moderation, control. Partly because of his years, Mr. Sammler embodies the disinterest he values. His near-death in the Nazi massacre, his loneliness, his race, his nationality, his intellect, his age, all place him at a distance from his planet. He has a cool head, a sharp eye, and a sense of limitation.

Bellow's conception in *Mr. Sammler's Planet* is clear: to surround his lucid, honorable old man with a host of comparatively young, modern characters all seeking to be limitless. These range from his niece, Angela, who knows no sexual bounds (what was once blasphemy is now hygiene, Sammler notes) to Sammler's own daughter, Shula, who steals a manuscript to help her father with his memoir on H. G. Wells. Margotte talks endlessly; Wallace believes his father performed abortions for the Mafia (he did); Eisen, Shula's Israeli ex-husband, is an artist and a killer; Cousin Bruch is a forearm fetishist. As in *The Adventures of Augie March,* Bellow supplies his bland protagonist with colorful companions. Just as Augie was surrounded by obsessed adults, so Sammler is surrounded by obsessed young adults.

Having introduced his characters in the first half of the novel, Bellow sends Mr. Sammler to the country estate of Gruner, his dying nephew. The stolen manuscript, *The Future of the Moon,* may be there. So may the Mafia money. Shula, Wallace, Margotte, and Dr. Lal, the Hindu scientist who wrote *The Future of the Moon,* all converge. What about that Negro pickpocket who had threatened Sammler by exhibiting his private parts? Will *he* show up?

Bellow is not really lighthearted, and he seems purposefully to undercut the dramatic potential of his story. After Mr. Sammler and Dr. Lal have had a pleasant talk (about the future of the moon and the present on earth), the novel falls off. The story falters. Bellow uses Mr. Sammler's day as a skeleton on which to hang a plethora of memory, observation and meditation. If these slow the novel, they're realistic enough. An older man thinks, he reflects, he enjoys a conversation with a kindred soul. Then too, Sammler, Gruner and Lal (the older males, generally) embody disinterest and reserve. They withhold their wills, they behave well in the face of disappointment. Gruner dies with immense dignity.

The Negro pickpocket, who appears at the beginning and near end of the novel, dramatizes Bellow's theme and clarifies what may be a misunderstand-

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ing. The call for limits and order may be construed as a call for law and order, especially since the theme is crime. Critics may in fact divide on this book on political grounds—Bellow obviously touches a raw nerve. But Bellow's view is more complex than Mayor Daley's and his perspective is larger.

When Sammler sees the Negro wrestling with his young friend Feffer on the street, he is horrified. Feffer had pictures of the thief to sell to *Look*. It was Sammler who told Feffer about the thief. When the crowd refused to help, and when Feffer refuses to give the Negro the camera, Sammler feels a sudden horror at his old man's powerlessness. A painful limit, indeed. He sees himself as "poor in spirit. Someone between the human and the not-human states." He rejects this limit by asking Eisen to interfere. Eisen brains the Negro with a sack of coins, he hits to kill, and then hits again. "This is much worse! This is the worst thing yet." The price of social order and personal affirmation is near-murder. The police arrive in time.

One may easily argue that Mr. Sammler's ideas require something like this story. The rational Mr. Sammler hurts another; man blunders when he doesn't murder. The answer? Act moderately, anyway. "Without limits you have monstrosity, always. Within limits? Well, within limits monsters also appear. But not inevitably."

Does the *story* demand these ideas? I'm not sure I see a tale here equal in weight to Mr. Sammler's reflections. Many critics complained that because *Herzog* took place within the hero's brain, we had no check on his thoughts. Mr. Sammler, transcending himself, sees clearly but he sees and sees and sees. And I think Bellow himself gets trapped by Sammler's virtues. In *Augie March* the secondary characters provided the theories, and they were amusing and eccentric. In *Mr. Sammler's Planet* the protagonist supplies them, and they are in deadly earnest.

We should have seen it coming. Herzog threatened with all his heart to live a life of reason, and we didn't believe him. Disinterest was implicit in the painful excesses of the earlier heroes. Drowning in their own tears, they would naturally feel the need to turn off the faucet. It was, you remember, the dry, controlled little guys who got along. The result is the creation of Bellow's first, full-fledged hero, embodying what I take to be the virtues Bellow now believes in. Mr. Sammler is normative, sane; while the early heroes fear for their sanity, it is the secondary characters here who are mad.

One of the ways—as Bellow himself proves—of creating a moving character is to make him desire something intensely. Desire creates suspense and affection; we may laugh at the rigidity of the character's desire, but we will usually like him. Mr. Sammler rejects this kind of desire, for it is boundless. He rejects the emotion and the willfulness that accompany it. In doing so he rejects as the object of veneration an enormous amount of human experience. I would prefer Mr. Sammler in our guest room, but I would rather read about Eugene Henderson.

No matter: Bellow's views do not preclude a tale, even if they make one more difficult. And in the meantime there are many reasons to read this novel. One might, in spite of my complaint, read the book for its thought on the current scene. Many read *Herzog* for its ideas, and *he* was almost crazy. Time for a sane man, especially if his views are controversial. The opinions may be said to form an art unto themselves.

Or one might read the novel, finally, for its style, which is cool, washed, smooth, without the metaphor or frenzy of the earlier works. Bellow finds the right tone, the mean between polish and vitality, and gives a sense of power under control. He achieves what one can only call a lovely fullness of expression.

Notes on New Fiction

LINDA KUEHL

Girls At Play (Houghton Mifflin, $4.95) is the nastiest book I've read since my last Montherlant novel, though I find the Frenchman's crusty malevolence easier to bear than this precocious American's self-amused sadism. At least Henri de Montherlant loves his eccentrics however perverse that love may be; Paul Theroux loathes his with a vengeance. Mercilessly he mocks a quartet of self-exiled Anglo schoolteachers, ridiculing their frigidity, bitchery and Memsab complex. Yet, so pathetic and vulnerable are these women that the hostility backfires. People as unattractive and destructive as they deserve compassion or at least authorial distance. Theroux may brilliantly recreate environment, expertly build scenes, and gracefully use words, but his venomous proximity to character gravely distorts what might otherwise have been a gem. . . . John Williams is a naturalistic novelist with just enough Sixty's cynicism to distinguish his work from the proletarian fiction of the Thirties, and almost enough updated content to distinguish it from that era's detective genre.

Sons of Darkness, Sons of Light (Little, Brown, $5.95) depicts Eugene Browning, an extension of Williams' last hero in *The Man Who Cried I Am*. Disaffected with the evolutionary process, Browning arranges for the murder of a white cop who has shot a black youth. A lot of intrigue follows along with lengthy biographies of minority group figures implicated in the scheme. Unfortunately, most of this obscures the ostensible subject which is Browning's divided nature: *his* conflict between moderation and militancy. Despite the protagonist's attempts at self-inquiry into his various roles as spouse, father, lover and activist, neither he nor the author furnishes any insight into his dilemma. Which shouldn't surprise anyone since Williams has always stressed wheeling-dealing within The Movement at the expense of human complexity. Conse-

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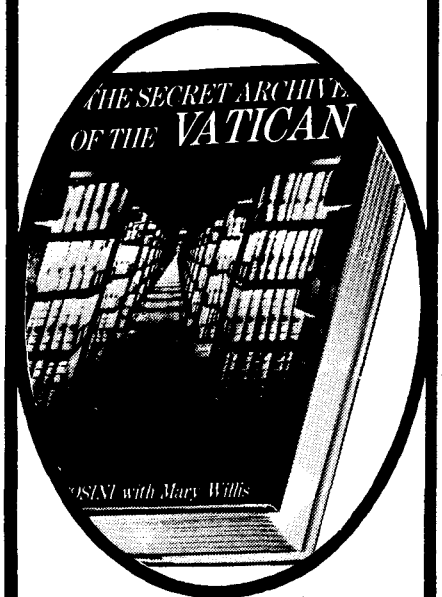

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Little, Brown

quently, his novels have provided entertainment of a popular sort but not, as the latest blurb asserts, works "that only a great artist could have written." To achieve this, he would have to stop exploiting the groovy scene and begin digging character. . . . *In A Wild Sanctuary* (Morrow, $6.95) dramatizes the absurdity obsessing four graduate students who, one drunken night, pick lots from a hat and bind themselves to a secret order of death. At first the pact seems a grotesque joke, but after summer recess and the resumption of university routine, an ominous note sets in, making it eerily clear that one of them will commit suicide. William Harrison handles the three subsequent deaths with finesse. Pacing them deftly and chillingly, the only weak spots are a pyrotechnical interior monologue that opens the book and an unresolved ending that finally lets the reader down. In between, however, suspense thriller techniques effectively plot the emotional collapse of his foursome: a fag botanist, a sexually hung-up writer, a hallucinating black mathematician, and an emotionally petrified psychologist. Blessedly free of clichés regarding the generation gap, educational reform, American fascism, *et. al.*, the book evokes the numb, desperate condition of contemporary youth. Harrison just misses eloquence—perhaps because he tries so hard—but his tough, easy manner marks him as a natural writer. . . . Dealing with the American dream in a gently ironic, beautifully low-key way is James Houston's second novel, *Gig* (Dial, $4.95). It takes place on a single Saturday night around the piano bar of a sporty nightclub on the Monterey Peninsula or thereabouts, where a crowd of garish Californians respond with abandon to some all-time favorite melodies lovingly rendered by number one boy dreamer, Roy Ambrose.

A tuning up session, three sets, intermissions and encore structure the book which swings on the crest of a nostalgic wave in the languid rhythms of Porter-Gershwin-Ellington-Kern. The West Coast setting and cast epitomize the American flight from reality toward the illusion of a romantic prewar past, from deep involvements to fleeting relationships, from ugly events to silver lining optimism, from daily monotony to some enchanted evening. But, like all escapes, this paper moon Saturday night turns into gloomy Sunday, at which point, Ambrose, the dream-peddler, must vanish. The gig (the musician's stint) is over! The piano player admits his own deception. His lilting, deliberately naive first person narrative deflates our national fantasy that permanence can materialize out of stardust, harvest moons, or that old black magic. It's a lyrical statement on an American theme—imaginative, touching, and most enjoyable. So now to read Houston's first novel, *Between the Battles.*

The Modern Schism: Three Paths to the Secular

MARTIN E. MARTY

Harper & Row, $5.95

ANSELM ATKINS

The Modern Schism is the split between the church and culture which occurred in America, England, and Europe during the years 1830-1870. Marty's thesis is that the secularization of Christendom has come about in three different ways. We are familiar with the high-powered God-killing of the French anti-clericals and the German post-Hegelian intellectuals—the Baurs, Feurbach, Marx, and Nietzsche. In Britain, however, God was left to die by himself, unattended. In America a stranger thing happened: the churches substituted the newfangled capitalist-imperialist policies for their own original message, while keeping the old religious language and symbols as if nothing had changed. And so the average American Christian—*Newsweek*'s Middle American—has come to identify many of his basic religious values with the American System itself. The church becomes the guardian of the Status Quo, investing in its businesses and blessing its helicopters.

Professor Marty writes to inform, not to edify. In other times and places he has suggested, or will suggest, what

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he thinks Christians are supposed to do or think about all this dark history. Here he simply lets history speak. But which wing of the schism should you belong to? Is the secular world right, or is the church right—and if neither is right, what is the alternative? The existential questions need to be asked, although they fall outside the scope of Marty's book. Allow me to shift modes from the historical to the edifying.

There are two sides to secularization: the intellectual-scientific and the political-economic. The church rejected the first type, and in doing so made a great mistake. It swallowed the second type—and was mistaken again. As an example of legitimate or "good" secularization, take Darwin in England. Though Newman and a few other thinkers tried to use the theory of evolution constructively in theology, the churches as a whole, along with most of their members, were obscurantist about evolution. In scorning Darwin's insights the church missed its chance for needed secularization.

At the same time, the church had no trouble compromising with forms of political-economic exploitation against which it should have waged prophetic war. This was the age of the Industrial Revolution and Charles Dickens. Did the church side with the workers and the poor, or with money? Cardinal Manning, who was called a socialist by his colleagues, was sympathetic toward the urban poor, but "provided no new vision and no profound critique" of the system. The Evangelicals tried to abolish the death penalty, prostitution, and prison brutality—but were against "dramatic or violent social change in matters where the fabric of British life itself might be threatened." Marty's evidence shows that the Christian answer to social ills during this period was (as always) to distribute alms to the needy and exhort the individual to higher personal morality, while abstaining from any radical criticism of the social and political structure responsible for the propagation and perpetuation of those ills. The church accepted the social status quo—of which it was itself, of course, a part—as willingly a hundred years ago as it does today.

Secularization is good for the church when it means critical receptivity to scientific and intellectual discoveries, and bad when it means fraternization with money and repressive power. As to the latter, Marty makes it quite clear that the church failed egregiously. But I find him unclear about the former. A couple of his remarks puzzle me. Was it "good" or "bad" for the church to absorb ideas from science and the surrounding culture? After describing the indifference and agnostic slippage which prevailed in England as a result of the theory of evolution and other things, he writes, "And yet many men hoped and what they had, they often called God." Are these hopeful men the hardshell churchmen who rejected Darwin? Rejection was, by and large, the church's response. Far be it from Marty to commend a backwoods monkey-trial religion, or a "hope" based on ignorance. But in that case, what men is he referring to, and what point is he trying to make against the intellectual currents which helped bring in secularization? Was there a Christian conventicle somewhere that was able to synthesize Darwin and the 39 articles? Who were they and where do they fit into the secularization process Marty has described?

In an earlier chapter Marty advises "the breathless discoverers of the principle of relevance" in our days that "it has been tried" in 19th century Germany, and has failed. This is one of the very few edifying remarks Marty has permitted himself. It's a free swing at the radicals. I react automatically. In the first place, it is inaccurate to say that the *church* adopted the principle of relevance (which is what we relevance-boys desire). According to Marty's evidence, only a handful of Germans, most of whom either left the church or were excommunicated by it, tried to move the church toward secular thinking. So it is not as if it had really been *tried*. Next, what does Marty have against relevance that makes him describe its contemporary proponents as "breathless"? Certainly relevant people are as breathlessly ri-

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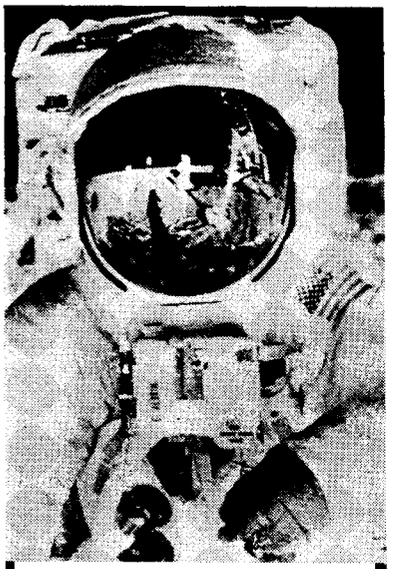

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diculous as any other people; and that, even though it is no news, is always worth saying. But seriously, what is the alternative to relevance? These are meant as friendly questions, and I know that Professor Marty will be able to answer them adequately in other places for me and his 31 other followers.

The Religious Man: A Psychological Study of Religious Attitudes

ANTOINE VERGOTE

Pflaum, $6.95

W. W. MEISSNER

Father Vergote, who teaches religious psychology at Louvain, has provided us with a workmanlike presentation of his views on the development and psychology of human religious attitudes. The translation is smooth and readable and the book should provide the interested lay reader with a view of religious conviction from the point of view of an academic psychologist.

The basic orientation is phenomenological. The author leans heavily on the work of Otto, Eliade, van der Leeuw, Heiler, Marcel, Jung, Teilhard de Chardin, and others. There is an attempt to link religious motivation to psychoanalytic insights derived from Freud and Jung which is rather abortive. Besides being quite outdated and ignoring all of the last generation of psychoanalytic development, the treatment is slightly marred by fragments of a passé anti-Freudian polemic. There is a final section on genetic aspects of religious psychology which is superficial and serves only to report major findings of some very limited research done for the most part a decade ago. The book suffers in general from a common defect of many books on the psychology of religion, particularly those offered from Catholic sources. It is apologetic in tone, tends to argue a brief rather than probe the evidence, follows in large part the tradition of arm-chair psychology and presents, therefore, a rather shaky grasp of the non-academic and clinical aspects of its subject matter. The only empirical material provided in the present work is a scattered reporting of some questionnaire data.

These are obvious limitations, of course, but they should not stand in the way of the intelligent lay reader who will find in this work much that is valuable and insightful. It is much to Father Vergote's credit that he does not encumber his views with a variety of archaic preoccupations that mar the efforts of so many Catholic authors in dealing with the complex and difficult field of the psychological understanding of religious phenomena. He is often perspicacious in acknowledging difficulties and, over-all, presents his reader with a more nuanced and mature view of man's religious involvement than is frequently found.

By far the best section of the work, even though largely derivative, is the chapter on religious experience. The phenomenological approach to the psychology of religion leans heavily on the analysis of the unique qualities of the religious experience. This direction was set by the work of William James and Rudolph Otto and subsequent scholars have followed their lead. They seek out the primary and irreducible experience of the sacred or the numinous—the *mysterium tremendum et fascinosum* that Otto described so luminously. Vergote presents a rather balanced analysis of this fundamental experience but tends to lay the primary emphasis on affectivity as the root of the religious experience. He sees the specifically religious experience which has God as its object as no longer prominent in a desacralized world, but points to more general attitudes toward existence and life which he feels approximate the religious attitude. These attitudes and experiences he calls pre-religious. The gulf between human consciousness and divine presence leaves room for another presence, that of the word of the Other. Religious discourse allows man to recognize in the Other a personal God. The *tremendum* and the *fascinosum* become personalized into reverential fear and recognition of God's saving action.

The phenomenological approach has in general been a most useful one for the analysis of psychological aspects of

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religion. It has produced a great literature and has had a profound influence on our understanding of man's religious situation. It carries with it, however, certain methodological limitations. It puts the emphasis on the conscious and behavioral aspects of religious activity. It also tends to focus the analysis in terms of certain unique or very intense and special experiences which are not commonly verifiable. Vergote tries to broaden this narrow base of analysis by an appeal to pre-religious experience but one could argue, if he preferred a less tender-minded approach, that pre-religious experiences were not religious at all. Thus the more recent phenomenological writing tends to present a rehashing of old insights that has not significantly contributed to our deeper understanding of religion.

Man's religious life is broader than the phenomenological lens would allow us to see. In the present work one longs for a sense of the inner unconscious dynamisms of man's relatedness to God. One looks for a sense of the social and cultural embeddedness that has become an integral part of our understanding of human behavior at all levels and which is so acutely relevant to man's religious life. But—to complain of these things is to complain about a literature rather than a book. As for the book, it will please many readers who will find it an up-to-date account of man's religious attitudes and of the structure of religious experience.

Sorry . . . No Govt. Today

Unions vs. City Hall

ED. ROBERT E. WALSH
Beacon, $5.95

JAMES J. GRAHAM

Implying that public employee unions threaten the processes of government, the catchy title of this collection of speeches and articles is misleading. The Walsh anthology is heavily weighted on the side of collective bargaining by state and municipal workers, a rarely disputed proposition; but on balance, contributors to the book, without in-depth discussion, also favor a highly controversial "limited" right to strike by such employees.

The editor, a Boston newspaperman, reveals his own bias with the generous but historically inexact comment, "when conditions become intolerable public employees do go on strike." The selections included are articulate, intelligent, and especially useful to readers interested in details of the bargaining process, examined here by relatively unknown management negotiators. Like much of the literature that emerges from the volatile world of labor-management relations, this book is not designed to disturb anyone's sensitivities.

Partisan, though sophisticated, writings by Labor's Best Black Friend Bayard Rustin, and unionists Jerry Wurf (municipal employees) and Charles Cogen (teachers) glow with moderation. Missing from the book are the nationally respected arbitrators, Arvid Anderson, David L. Cole and George Taylor, all of whom categorically reject direct action in the public sector in favor of alternative forms of redress. For a profound treatment of the strike issue, I recommend a symposium in the March 1969 issue of the *University of Michigan Law Review.*

Militant public employees are a recent phenomenon. An executive order in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy, recognizing the organizational rights of Federal workers, also has an enormous psychological impact on states and cities. However, little mention is made in this anthology that severe criminal penalties restraining strike activities do not seem to have destroyed viable collective bargaining on the Federal level.

On the other hand, readers misty-eyed about the rights of labor will be pleased to find here ready acceptance of an equation between private and public employment. Cynical, in assuming that for the sake of a balanced budget a mayor will negotiate as ruthlessly as a profit-making employer, a dogmatic view of strikes is also predicated on the naive notion that most are triggered by objectively just grievances

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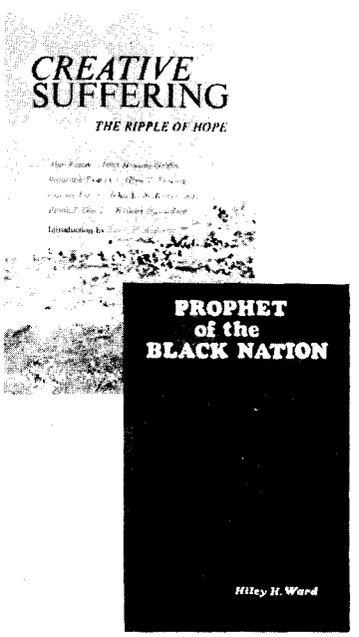

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and that few union leaders have feet of clay. On the contrary, some picket lines should be crossed. Contrast the moral crusades of Memphis sanitationmen and New York and Charleston hospital workers with Albert Shanker's 37-day vendetta against Ocean Hill.

Increasingly jurists have stressed impartial arbitration as a matter of public policy and will readily impose severe damages for breach of a no-strike clause. No such penalties befall recalcitrant public employees. These enjoy the best of both worlds. Teachers in New York in 1968, successfully violating both contracts and statute, walked out with their supervisors and expected to be paid for strike time.

Strikes not subject to equalizing economic pressures often involve complex social issues not easily resolved at the bargaining table. For example, to what extent may a contract supersede Civil Service regulations or, conversely, should special employee interests prevent modification of seniority rules to satisfy the needs of ghetto schools?

The drastic social consequences of public employee strikes receive inadequate treatment in the Walsh anthology. Messrs. Rustin and Wurf (and, of course, Cogen) presumably would exclude teachers from the "disaster" situations justifying a strike ban. Yet in recent years this critical category has been the most militant of all. Traditionally denied prestige and adequate wages, and angered by the imposition of unfair burdens in the current urban crisis, principals and truant officers feel free to set a disastrous bad example for their charges. Ethnic grievances reportedly helped trigger the tragic Montreal police strike which also mocked the possibility of restricting the strike option to non-essential employees.

In the big American cities a false civil libertarianism has replaced taxpayers' niggardliness. When we permit a police union official to smirkingly announce on television a coming epidemic of Asian Flu among his men, it is time to ask whether this generation of adults has the right to punish its children for the sins of our past. *Sorry . . . No Government Today* neither poses nor answers this question.

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REVIEWERS

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 523)

understandably, Father Dirvin's letter is rather heavier on wounded indignation than on fact. But all the indignation in Jamaica won't change the fact that ten days before Christmas, 1965, the administrators of Saint John's University fired thirty-three of their faculty, and to this day the reasons for the firings (assuming, for the moment, that reasons existed) have been kept secret—*not by those who were fired, but by* those who did the firing. Father Dirvin's plaintive reference to defending yourself "with your hands tied behind your back" is a specious play for sympathy: if St. John's University finds itself with its hands tied behind its back, that's because it has done the tying. There is no one else to blame.

Father Dirvin also points out that the university made its offer of arbitration on March 7, 1967. In other words, it took them fifteen months and the threat of losing their accreditation (he forgot to mention the inquiry by the Middle States Association) to come up with their modest proposal, to which they added a "pledge of confidentiality"—a fine phrase which means only a strong second effort to shore up the wall of silence.

Four years have passed, and I and others are still waiting to learn why we were among the chosen thirty-three. Having asked publicly and privately, I'll try once more to make my requests clear: I want to know on what grounds I was fired. I want to confront the people who spoke against me. I am also curious to know how this "pledge of confidentiality" is interpreted when an inquiry is made by a prospective employer, a member of the hierarchy, a government agency, or a political opponent. And when we're all finished, I'd like an apology.

In its unhurried pursuit of justice, St. John's University has tried calumny, then aloofness, and now *argumentum ad misericordiam*. Perhaps when they run out of evasive tactics they will, in desperation, try honesty.

We'll be waiting.

JOHN MORRESSY

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To the Editors: Eric Cochrane has given an accurate report of the "Incident at Isolotto" [Jan. 9]. The reaction of a majority of thinking Italian laymen to the Communità Del'Isolotto was strongly favorable. The Catechism they published, *Incontro a Gesu*, could be a model for some worthwhile catechetical renewal here. *Commonweal* has performed a valuable service in making this "Incident" known here. To many of us living in Italy at the time, the action taken against the Communità was a source of great anguish.

(FR.) DECLAN BAILEY, O.F.M.

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